

[Congressman Joe Pitts](#) (PA-16) penned the following op-ed, asking the question: "where are the jobs?"

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Where are the Jobs?

By Congressman Joe Pitts

When President Obama signed the \$787 billion so-called economic stimulus bill earlier this year, he said it was necessary in order to save and create jobs. In fact, he said it would save or create four million jobs.

The President's economic team claimed the bill would keep unemployment from climbing above 8 percent. Yet, today, the unemployment rate stands at a 26 year high of 9.5 percent and everyone, including the President, believes it will rise beyond 10 percent before it gets any better.

According to the assumptions of the President's own economic advisors, not passing any stimulus at all would have lead to a lower unemployment rate than the 9.5 percent we are looking at now.

Recently, Vice President Joe Biden went on television to defend the stimulus plan and said that "everyone guessed wrong" on the impact of the economic stimulus. Though the Vice President may have been attempting to defend the plan, I cannot imagine a more insulting notion to the American people than to indicate \$787 billion of their tax money was spent guessing it might have helped the economy.

I was not guessing at all when I voted against the plan. I knew that a bloated, big government, special interest give-away would not be the remedy our economy needed. In fact, in a January 28 memo to my constituents, I explained I voted against the bill because I knew it wasn't going to work. I explained that, "at best, twelve percent of this bill goes to creating jobs. The rest is simply old-fashioned government spending, which will not grow the economy."

Jobs don't come from the federal government-they come from the entrepreneurial spirit of the American people. Prosperity is not something the government can simply "create." That may be a difficult thing for Congress to admit, but it's true. Only the American people and the businesses they work for can do it, through hard work, smart investing, and creative entrepreneurship. But government can get in the way by crowding out private industry and misallocating funds for wasteful projects.

I did not vote against the stimulus plan with nothing in mind to offer as an alternative. In that same memo, I noted that, "The only thing that can create real growth is an American public confidently engaged in spending, investing, and entrepreneurship. Congress can help to create that confidence by leaving money in the economy instead of removing it to pay for more bureaucracy. It can do that by encouraging entrepreneurship and investment-once again through lower taxes. It can do that by helping open new markets abroad for American exports. It can do that through wise regulation that does not impede innovation and entrepreneurship but does stop the excesses of greed and foolishness."

Republicans in the House presented an alternative plan that would have helped businesses create 6.2 million new jobs; reduced the bottom two income tax brackets; allowed small businesses to take a tax deduction equal to 20 percent of their income; eliminated taxes on unemployment benefits; extended unemployment benefits; and created a new health insurance deduction.

Unemployment is now at a 26 year high, and the taxpayers have been swindled out of \$787 billion that has gone to liberal spending priorities, Social Security checks for dead people, and wasteful or unnecessary projects.

I propose we end this misguided project before it gets any worse. Since the President's own economic advisors admit that doing nothing would have been better than the stimulus plan, let's stop spending the money.

This is why I have signed on as a cosponsor to the REBOUND Act (H.R. 3140). It would recall the authority to spend any stimulus funds that have not already been obligated - saving taxpayers \$460 billion. It would leave intact the tax relief and unemployment benefits in the plan. Further, it would prohibit the Treasury Secretary from spending any returned TARP funds

- saving taxpayers \$150 billion. It would also require all repayments of TARP money to go exclusively to debt reduction.

The first thing to do when you find yourself in a hole is stop digging. If slow government spending on liberal funding priorities isn't creating the jobs the President promises, then let's stop the spending. If the plan isn't working, let's use the money instead to reduce the deficit and get our fiscal house in order.

A government that lives within its means will go a long way toward creating the kind of environment in which the entrepreneurs of America can create the jobs we need to help us get the economy back on track.